

## Chasing Shadows at Midnight

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Summary: Both a teacher and a student are wandering the corridors of Hogwarts at midnight, dangerously close to another Professor's office. Raised voices and arguments ensue. Set during Prisoner of Azkaban.

## Chasing Shadows at Midnight

**\*\*A/N:** This is set during Prisoner of Azkaban, the night that Harry finds out what his connection to Sirius is after eavesdropping on the conversation in The Three Broomsticks.**\*\***

**\*\*Part of the If You Dare Challenge. The prompt was 977 - Chasing Shadows at Midnight.\*\***

**\*\*Sarah x\*\***

\* \* \*

><p>Remus Lupin strolled down the first-floor corridor, tired but more content than he had been in...well, in twelve years. Here, he had a home, and he had friends, even if he did have to deal with Severus Snape every day â€" though Snape was grudgingly making his life easier by way of Wolfsbane Potion. And, though he was content, tonight he felt more on edge. Though he had no concrete proof, he knew for a fact that Harry Potter had slipped out to Hogsmeade today; he did not know what the boy may or may not have overheard: Madam Rosmerta never was one for keeping her voice down.<p>

Remus knew Harry had his father's Cloak, which meant it wasn't hard for him to sneak around without detection. Of course, he was in no position to preach about sticking to school rules, considering what he and his friends must have been doing this day twenty years ago, but he never had an enraged and murderous member of the Black family after him, either. But then, Remus remembered, most of that family were varying degrees of insane anyway. Sirius' actions should not

have shocked him as much as they had done initially.

Within these corridors, he had been happy as a teenager, always with his friends. Even his "furry little problem," as James used to call it, had not detracted all that much from his life back then, especially once his friends were able to join him when he changed.

But now, he had none of his friends. James and Peter were dead. Sirius had brought about both of their deaths and was now on the run, having escaped Azkaban.

The only connections he had left to those days of being young and somewhat free were this castle, and James' son, Harry. Since joining the staff, he had heard of what Harry had already achieved and overcome; he had saved the Philosopher's Stone, saved Ginny Weasley, faced down Lord Voldemort twice, set free the Malfoys' house elf, got beaten up the Whomping Willow in a flying car, and endured living with Lily's sister who, by all accounts, treated him like something she scraped off the bottom of her shoe.

He certainly inherited his father's attraction to trouble.

In all honesty, he didn't even know what he was doing up and about in the dead of night. It was like chasing shadows at midnight, knowing he would never manage to catch them. The only time he saw a shadow was in the moon's glow that burst through the windows; it was far too late, with too much damage done, to reclaim what once danced in these moonlit corridors.

But, further along the corridor, Remus saw a shadow. A real one. Someone was standing at the corner, blocking the moonlight before it hit the floor.

Unsure of who it was, and because of the current climate regarding Sirius Black, Remus drew his wand and whispered, "\_Lumos\_." Under the wandlight, he saw a familiar figure, skulking in the hallway, much. He had to remind himself James was dead when the likeness in the dim light struck him. "Harry," Remus sighed, approaching the figure with less caution. "It's much too later for you to be lurking the corridors. You ought not to wander alone at the moment."

"So everybody keeps telling me."

The retort was snappy. Angry.

"It's just a pity nobody will tell me the truth as much as they'll tell me to watch my back."

He knew something.

Remus felt his stomach freeze with something he couldn't quite place. "Harry, I don't know what you've heard, but-

"You knew, too, didn't you?" Harry rounded on him mercilessly. "You've known all this time, all year, and you didn't bother to tell me." Remus couldn't find the words to answer him, for he could not quite tell which of the secrets kept from him that Harry had discovered. "Black!" Harry shouted suddenly. "He handed my mum and dad to Voldemort! They trusted him â€" they trusted him enough to

make him my godfather " and he turned them over to Voldemort!"

Remus had the urge to step back from Harry, as he looked like he might curse the nearest living thing in the vicinity, but he fought it, and instead stepped forwards. "Harry, you must understand the position I have been in," he began, but he stopped short of really getting into his explanation.

He couldn't tell Harry of his condition. With an inward groan under Harry's expectant and furious gaze, he found himself compelled to continue, and dance around any details about his lycanthropy.

"You've been with your aunt and uncle for twelve years," Remus reminded him. "For ten of those years, none of us had access to you, and even if we had, your aunt and uncle wouldn't have allowed it. I've had very little contact with anyone since your parents died, until I started teaching this year," he explained. "Do not ask me to answer for anyone else," he added when Harry opened his mouth to argue that, although Remus had no access to him, Dumbledore and possibly even Minerva McGonagall could have made contact over the matter of Sirius Black. "They will have their reasons, I am sure of it. Nobody wants to sideline you. They want you to be safe. Your parents didn't die to save you, just for us to allow you to be killed anyway."

He was consciously keeping his tone level and calm in an effort to placate the boy before him. Harry was a mountain of missed opportunities for Remus; had James and Lily lived, he could have been so much more to their son. But now he had the chance to help, even if it was twelve years too late.

Unfortunately, it didn't seem to be having the desired effect.

"That's not the point!" yelled Harry, finally exploding. "Mr. Weasley was the only person who had the common decency to tell me to my face that Black's after me! I've had enough! Do you think I can't handle it?!" he demanded loudly. "I'm the one who went into the Chamber of Secrets to save Ginny Weasley last year! I got to the Philosopher's Stone, didn't I? And in case you hadn't noticed, Prof-"

"What in the world is going on?!" came a stern and familiar voice, one that made Remus freeze as a teenager, usually in the middle of some harebrained practical joke. "It is well past midnight! There should be nobody walking the corridors at this time of the night!"

Remus spun on his heels to find Minerva McGonagall glaring at them from her office door, wearing a tartan dressing gown and a thoroughly unimpressed expression.

"In my office, both of you," snapped Minerva, whom, even now, Remus dared not disobey. They followed her in to the office, where the fire was the only light; Harry looked as wary as Remus felt. "Sit down," she told them. Remus sat on a chair, while Harry refused and remained on his feet. Minerva let an exasperated sniff escape her before she continued. "Now, why are the Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher

and my most trouble-prone Gryffindor arguing outside my office at an hour when anyone with any sense about them would be asleep?"

The only thing Remus could do was let his gaze fall onto Harry; Minerva, too, was staring at the thirteen-year-old. After all, Harry was the one who started arguing when Remus stated that it wasn't wise to wander through the school alone at night. Under their scrutiny, it seemed, Harry was beginning to crack. "Harry," Remus sighed, resigned to the fact this had to be discussed sooner or later. "If there is something you feel you need to say, now is the time to say it."

Harry seemed to be having a furious inward debate about something; he wore an expression that told Remus that telling the whole truth would land him in hot water. He had seen that look grace James' face too many times to mistake it.

When Harry finally spoke, it was through clenched teeth. "I know everything," snarled Harry. Remus glanced at Minerva, who only allowed the faintest trace of alarm on her features. "I know Black is after me. I know he got my parents murdered. I know he killed Peter Pettigrew," he listed relentlessly. "And I know he's my godfather."

"Potter-" Minerva started to speak, weariness seeping into her voice at this late hour.

"Don't, Professor!" shouted Harry, so suddenly that Remus jumped slightly. "I know you knew all along! So did Professor Lupin! So did Professor Dumbledore! So did Mr. and Mrs. Weasley! So did the Minister! Why is it that the only person who knows nothing about me is me?!"

Minerva strode up to Harry and sternly barked an order at him "Get a grip, Potter!"

But Harry ignored her. "And you know, Mr. Weasley is the only one who has told me anything since Black escaped. Yeah, I overheard him, but he was going to tell me. He said Black might come after me, and that I can't go looking for him, no matter what I might hear," he snorted, emphasising those last four words with angry derision. "And this is what he meant, isn't it? Why couldn't you just tell me?! One of you? ANY OF YOU!" he roared, causing Minerva's mouth to drop open a little in shock. Remus could only guess Harry had never spoken to a teacher like this before.

"And how do you happen to have come by this knowledge?" Minerva demanded, her eyes narrowed in suspicion. She probably knew Harry well enough to know he had his father's talent for getting into bother already.

Harry laughed bitterly. "That doesn't even matter, Professor! Of all the things that matter right now, that isn't one of them!" Those words made it clear to Remus that Harry had heard about this while lurking somewhere he never should have been, but kept his mouth shut for fear of inflaming the situation. "What matters is that you all knew and you chose not to tell me a damn thing! You're nothing but a liar! You're no better than the rest of them!" he shouted at his Head of House, clearly in a fit of previously bottled-up rage.

Remus got to his feet and stood next to Minerva, staring Harry down. "I agree, Harry," he said calmly. "Someone should have sat you down and told you. \_But\_, " he added, seeing the astonished look upon Minerva's face, "you have no right to shout at Professor McGonagall. She spends her time looking out for you and your friends, just as she looked after me, your father and our friends, and she does it so well that you don't even notice."

Harry's reply came fast and infuriated when he pointed out, "Yeah, because I'm sure you were all good as gold at school," with caustic sarcasm.

"Whatever your father got up to at school, and whatever jokes he may have played, he would never have dreamed of speaking to Professor McGonagall the way you have just done," Remus persevered. "And quite frankly, he would have been ashamed to hear that his son had treated her with such disrespect."

Remus pointedly avoided Minerva's gaze, preferring not to know what her face looked like at that moment. But that had done the trick. Harry looked at the floor for a moment and then looked back up at Minerva. "Sorry, Professor."

Minerva made no reply, but Remus had known her long enough not to expect one.

"The bottom line, Harry," he continued, his tone less authoritative but still firm, "is that Professor McGonagall here, as well as myself, Professor Dumbledore, Mr. and Mrs, Weasley and. I dare say, Cornelius Fudge, had your best interests at heart. We all know you've been through more than enough in your short life. We have been trying to shield you from hurt and from Black; perhaps we went about it the wrong way, but that's the end of it. You know now."

Harry nodded silently, seemingly accepting of this explanation. Remus was able to watch the rage dissipate from his body as his stance relaxed and his face returned to its normal softness.

"And if I \_ever\_ hear you speak to Professor McGonagall like that again," he warned seriously, "I will put you in detention for a week. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, Professor," Harry murmured.

"Good," he replied. "Now, get yourself off to bed before you freeze to death."

Again, Harry nodded his head. "Goodnight, Professor Lupin, Professor McGonagall," he said.

"Goodnight," Remus and Minerva returned in unison.

Once Harry was safely out the door, Minerva rounded on Remus. It was something he had expected to happen, but it didn't make it any less intimidating. "Remus, I am perfectly capable of dealing with Potter myself," she informed him curtly.

"I know you are," he answered her, keeping his voice quiet and serene. "But I wasn't about to stand by and let Harry disrespect you like that. James and Lily would be turning in their graves if they

thought I'd let him off with that," he informed her gently. The look on Minerva's face was well worth the explanation; she was clearly still affronted by the idea that Remus had felt the need to stick up for her, but he could see she was flattered that he thought disrespecting her to be such a serious misdemeanour. "And now, Minerva, I think it is time for us to get some sleep as well. Goodnight," he smiled. It was best not to give her the opportunity to argue.

Minerva scrambled together her ability to speak and bade him goodnight, leaving Remus to see himself out of her office.

He walked back down that same corridor, back through the moonlight, towards his office. There had been a shadow here after all, but he didn't need to chase it. It came to him to be banished.

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><p><strong>Please feel free to tell me what you think!<br>Sarah  
x\*\*

End  
file.